

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

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NEWS RELEASE

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Drop in vaccination leaves children vulnerable to other diseases

CAMP MURRAY, WA – Immunization rates among children [appear to be dropping](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic. This leaves children and communities at risk.

Providers in Washington's Childhood Vaccine Program reported they administered 30 percent fewer vaccines to 0-18 year olds in March of this year compared with the same month in previous years. In April, preliminarily we are seeing a 42 percent decrease, but that number may change as April data continue to be reported.

The amount of vaccine ordered by providers in March also fell both in Washington state and nationwide. "We are concerned that babies and kids aren't getting all the vaccines they need to protect them," said Dr. Kathy Lofy, state health officer at the Washington State Department of Health. "Decreasing vaccinations increases the risk that we could see an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease."

Parents and guardians should make an appointment right away for any immunizations their child has missed. Parents may be nervous about going in to a clinic. But health care providers are making clinics safe for families to visit.

"Now is the time to catch up. Talk to your doctor, nurse, or clinic about ways you can get vaccinated," Lofy said.

The department and the Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics encourage providers to ask any patients who have missed well-child visits or are behind on vaccinations to come in. Prioritize care and vaccination of infants and young children 0 to 24 months of age, followed by children age 4 to 6 years. Find more [guidance for providers](#).

For more information on COVID-19, visit the [Department of Health's website](#) or call 1-800-525-0127. You can also text the word "coronavirus" to 211-211 to receive information and updates on your phone wherever you are.

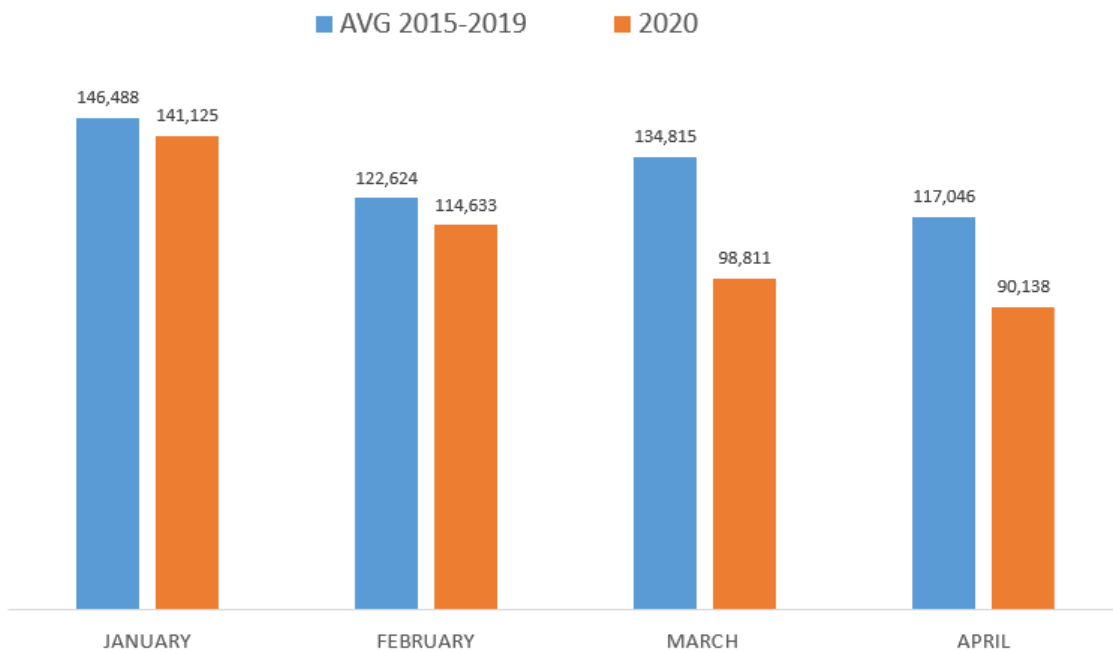
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Vaccines Administered to Children 0 through 2 Years Old in Washington

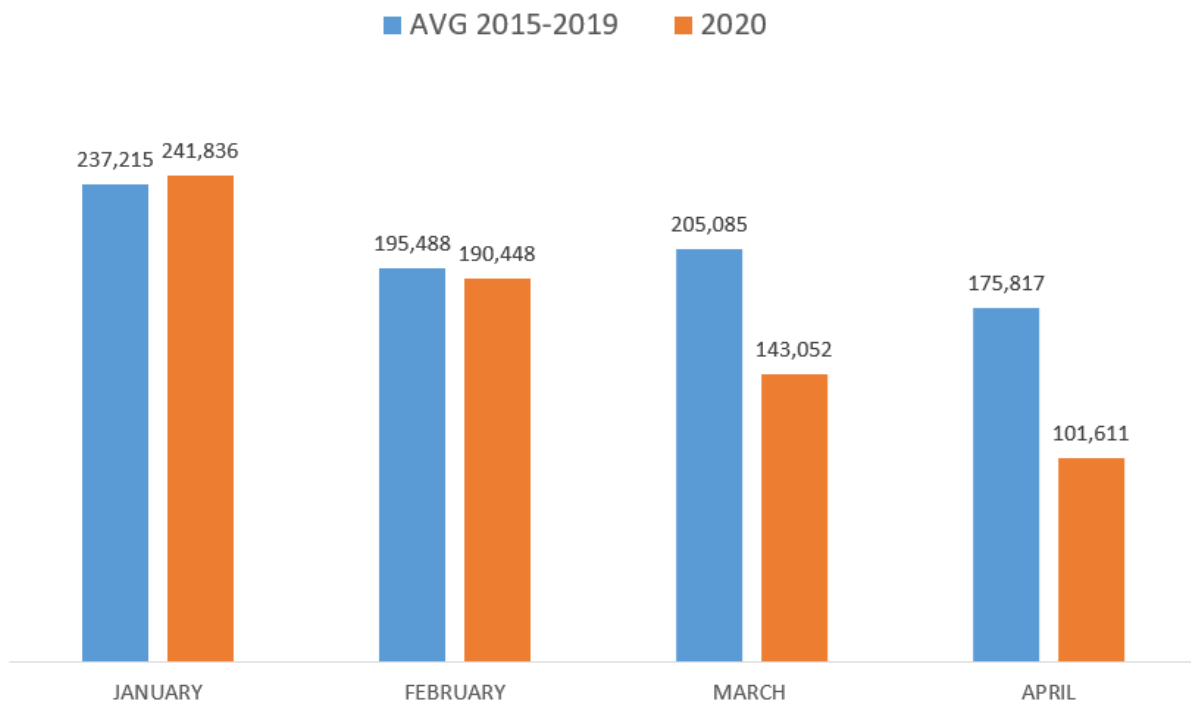
Chart Compares Average Number in 2015-2019 with 2020



Data source: WA State Immunization Information System; all vaccines reported as of 5/6/2020

Vaccines Administered to People 0 through 18 Years Old in Washington

Chart Compares Average Number in 2015-2019 with 2020



Data source: WA State Immunization Information System; all vaccines reported as of 5/5/2020